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## Kenyon Collegian - May 19, 2020

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## Tensions run high as admin hosts forum on Handbook changes

LINNEA MUMMA  
NEWS EDITOR

At the May 14 virtual forum discussing the new Student Handbook and Student Organization Handbook, over 35 students and alumni made it clear that they were unhappy with many of the administration's proposed changes. What began with issues of clarity and wording ultimately uncovered larger problems with the administration's practices, specifically those related to accessibility within Greek life, gray areas in the investigation process and a large divide between the rights of students and the power of the administration.

The forum began with a brief introduction from Vice President of Student Affairs Meredith Harper Bonham '92, who thanked students for their feedback and discussed the lengthy process behind drafting the documents. Though many students had expressed concerns about the timing of the new Handbook's release given the current circumstances, Bonham explained that the process behind such revisions had started long before the administration became aware of the pandemic. Back in the summer of 2018, Campus Senate passed a new constitution, and because of this, Bonham and her colleagues realized it was time to look into drafting a new Student Handbook.

"It had been at least 10 years since the Student Handbook had gone through any significant revision, so what had happened over the years is that different pieces got added at different points," Bonham said. "We endeavored to make sure that this was a document that was clear, that was concise and as transparent as possible."

Upon closer examination of the revised Handbook, however, students quickly realized that it lacked transparency. After Bonham's May 7 email announcing the finalized draft of the Student Handbook and Student Organization Handbook, students scoured both documents and filled out the Google Form offering their feedback.

Bonham explained that most of the feedback she received fell into three categories: the extent to which students have a voice in future revisions, the ability of students to have input on the social events with alcohol policy and confusion about restrictions on new local Greek organizations. To begin the conversation, she compared the language in the old Handbook to the new one.

In the old version, it was written that students were to be notified of changes to the Handbook via email or the College website, but there was no mention of Student Council or their role in the revision process. The new Handbook, however, states that changes will be brought to Student Council before they are updated on the College website and conveyed to students via email.

In conjunction with the attention to word choice, Harry Clennon '21 asked Bonham for clarification on what she meant by practice versus policy. She told him that a practice was "something we do on a daily basis; a policy is something

written and codified in the Student Handbook." After Bonham made this distinction, many students were still confused as to what "practices" were in use before they were officially made into a policy.

"It seems like some practices turn into policies and exist outside of what students know is going on," Clennon said. "How are we as students supposed to understand that distinction?"

Bonham also clarified that disallowing new local Greek organizations has been a long-standing practice within the Office of Student Engagement. She explained that this decision was made due to issues of liability, one that Bonham claimed was "outside of the College's control."

"The reason for no new local Greek organizations is that they have a very high risk profile and the insurance company of the College has told us that we cannot have any new organizations recognized by the College, or it runs the risk of the College losing its insurance or paying additional premiums," she said.

However, students were not convinced that this was merely a liability issue, as opposed to a continuous effort on the part of the administration to limit the amount of Greek organizations on campus.

"It seems to me that this is limiting the ability of future organizations to come to campus, whether local or national," said Katherine Crawford '22, a member of Alpha Sigma Tau (AST), Kenyon's only national sorority. "I don't see Kenyon being bettered by limiting local organizations. They are a vital part of Kenyon's community."

Another point of contention was the fact that the dues of local groups are lower than those of national organizations, pointing to greater issues of accessibility within Greek life and who can participate in it. For context, all of the national organizations at Kenyon cost over \$300 per semester while local organizations cost from \$100-\$200 per semester.

"I know local groups have lower dues and can be more accessible to low-income students. I would like to make the dues more accessible across the board," said Director of Student Engagement Sam Filkins.

Students were also upset by the fact that this policy would disproportionately affect those wishing to be a part of sororities, given that over 60 national fraternities exist that could establish themselves at Kenyon, compared to only 26 national sororities.

"In my four years, local sororities have been cooperative with the school's policies and have hosted numerous events that enrich the community," Abigail Salzman '20, a former president of Epsilon Delta Mu (EDM), said. "Are efforts being made to think of another classification for social organizations that can serve similar functions and create those social spaces without having to go national?"

In response to Salzman's concerns, both Bonham and Dean of Campus Life Laura Kane emphasized that national fraternities and sororities are banned from

hosting all-campus events by national, rather than College-level, regulations. However, this clarification led to a bigger problem: with the new restrictions on local organizations, there would be a decrease in all-campus events. Students argued that the entire campus would feel the loss of all-campus parties.

"In 2017, when the College's own Alcohol Task Force found that all-campus parties were the drinking event least associated with risks of alcohol poisoning, the Office of Student Engagement did not look for ways to expand these events," Evan Wagner '22 commented in the online chat during the forum. "Instead, they are taking every effort to stamp out all-campus, leading to an increase in the number of small unregistered parties with unregulated alcohol that the Task Force had determined to be most dangerous."

Bonham acknowledged the positive impacts of all-campus parties on campus culture and alcohol consumption, but suggested that reducing them may also have had such an impact. "I do want to note that we have seen this decline in all-campus parties over the last year and a half, two years. I should note too that transports for excessive intoxication to the hospital have also declined," she said. "There may not be a correlation, but I think that's a good data point to keep in mind."

Finally, a number of students voiced the need for more transparency in regard to the student conduct section of the Handbook, feeling as though the College's investigative process brought unneeded stress to students. Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities James Jackson promised that the administration would do their best to make edits to this section of the Handbook, but added that some amount of ambiguity is necessary in certain instances.

"When we start an investigation, we don't want organizations to plan out what they're going to say to us. If we show too much too early, there are times when we interview students and they will all have the same answers, showing that they got together beforehand to craft those answers," Jackson said. "There are ways we can find a balance in improving the investigation process, while somewhat maintaining the purpose of the investigation process."

The concerns over accessibility and inclusion led to greater questions regarding student autonomy within both Student Council and the Campus Senate. Despite the inclusion of Student Council in the new Handbook's ratification processes, students expressed the concern that the input of Student Council was not enough, as it would limit the amount of voices involved with future shifts from practice to policy.

"It seems like it's the role of our student elective bodies to make decisions about student life. It seems very easy for the administration to reject those decisions under the radar, without a clear legitimization of why they rejected them," said Wagner.

"We aren't able to respond as a unified student body."

As part of the discussion on student input on administrative policies, students also raised concerns about the role of the Campus Senate and whether or not the content of its meetings could be broadcast to the student body when an important decision was made. To this end, Bonham explained that Campus Senate was not a "legislative body," and hadn't been for many years. She said that, two years ago, the Senate went through a "significant revision" to its constitution because it "did not have an especially clear function." She cited a smoking policy that Campus Senate put in place several years ago as leading to this change.

"There was no formal mechanism for moving that policy forward. What the new Campus Senate constitution does is provide greater autonomy to Student Council to discuss specific matters that relate to students," Bonham said. "No longer does Student Council fall under Campus Senate."

Because of this, Bonham said that, while the Senate's role is limited to making policy recommendations to senior staff, "Student Council does have the ability to advise specifically on any potential changes to the Student Handbook."

In the Student Council meeting on May 10, students questioned the limitations of this structure of governance.

"At one point, students and faculty did have direct voting input into policies and handbooks," Student Council Vice President for Academic Affairs Bradley Berklich '22 said. "There's some bit of a vacuum of real, measurable input that would hold things really accountable ... I do not think that the measurable student input has been replaced."

In response, Bonham explained that the administration sometimes has to "implement policies that may be unpopular with students" due to legal, health and safety reasons, but said she wanted to make sure that both revised Handbooks included clear language that would take student input on such policies into account.

"Putting policies out into a referendum every time is just not practical," she said. "I am hopeful that Student Council will continue to strengthen in the years to come, and be a loud voice that we can come to and consult with when there are any points of contention."

After the lengthy forum, many students felt underrepresented in the College's decision-making process. They also asked to see concrete changes on the part of the administration, which Filkins, Kane and Bonham all promised to deliver. Whether this meant the creation of scholarship funds to make national Greek organizations more inclusive, the constant stream of communication between Student Council and the student body or a more precise wording on the policies found in the student conduct section, the three administration members at the forum promised to do better.

"Based on what the student body wants to see from the Campus Senate, if we had some process of the administration making it clear that they were going against the wishes of the Campus Senate, we would be able to respond more as a unified body," Wagner said.

# Students and administration clash on COVID housing policy

**KASSIE RIMEL**  
ASSOCIATE COPY EDITOR

Kenyon's firm COVID-19 policy prevents students still living on campus from returning if they leave the local area. Any student who chooses to travel more than one hour from Kenyon will not be allowed to return, with no exceptions.

For Shara Morgan '22, this is a devastating policy. Morgan's grandmother has contracted bacterial pneumonia and pre-existing health conditions have exacerbated its severity. Despite the seriousness of her grandmother's illness, Morgan was unable to visit her at the time because she lives in Florida. Morgan reached out to Dean of Campus Life Laura Kane, to see if there was a way she could travel to see her grandmother and return to campus after the trip,

but was told she would not be allowed to come back. Morgan then appealed to Vice President of Student Affairs Meredith Bonham '92, who also rejected her request, reiterating that the policy was put in place to ensure the safety of the Kenyon community.

Bonham told Morgan, "We make decisions that are mindful of all the students who remain on campus," and later emphasized to the *Collegian*, "we need to be very careful given that our students are in a congregate living situation."

Morgan said that the rigidity of the policy made her feel as though the administration was unsympathetic to her situation. She offered to isolate herself in her apartment following her visit, but the administration said they were planning to pair her with a roommate and didn't want to put additional students at risk. Morgan

was frustrated they wouldn't allow her to continue to live alone where she could self-quarantine. "If I am alone, it is not impacting anybody," Morgan said. "But the decision [the administration] is making is going to impact me for the rest of my life."

Yet Kane and Bonham believe this policy is in the best interest of the Kenyon community. With the students living in such close contact with one another, a single person returning to campus with the virus could spread it rapidly.

"If students do have a compelling reason to be traveling elsewhere, then students will have a difficult choice to make," Kane said.

Although Morgan was not granted permission to return to campus, she ultimately made the decision to depart from Kenyon. She will leave her belongings at

her friend's house in North Carolina and drive to Florida to see her grandmother for a week before driving back to live with her friend for two weeks until her lease is available in Washington, D.C.

According to Kane, all students living on campus will begin moving into apartments after finals week. This move will be completed before off-campus students return to retrieve their belongings starting May 30. The administration's objective is to make sure students are staying safe during the 12-day retrieval, and provide each student with an in-house kitchen.

However, Ezra Moguel '21 has voiced concerns that the administration is not acting in students' best interests, citing that the Office of Residential Life (ResLife) is not fulfilling his housing ac-

comodations. Moguel, who is approved to stay on campus for the summer, lived in a dorm this semester but recently received accommodations from ResLife for a private bathroom. After spring break, all students approved to stay were moved into Caples Residence Hall, McBride Residence Hall or Mather Residence Hall for consolidation. Although students already living in apartments were allowed to remain there, Moguel was not moved into an available apartment despite the specifications outlined in his new housing accommodations. Instead, Moguel was moved into another dorm residence that he said, "wouldn't be good for [him] because [his] accommodations specify living in an apartment."

All housing and dining policies will remain in place until August 1, when they will be re-evaluated.

## Emotional Health and Well-Being Task Force shares progress update

**JACKSON WALD**  
MANAGING EDITOR

A Task Force on Emotional Health and Well-Being was formed in fall 2019 to propose and discuss changes to Kenyon's administrative response regarding mental health issues—especially following the controversial "Send Silence Packing" event that occurred in September. The Task Force features a combination of administrators, faculty and students and is run by Vice President of Student Affairs Meredith Bonham '92 and John B. McCoy-Banc One Distinguished Teaching Professor of Music Dane Heuchemer.

According to the Task Force's most recent report, their main objective, following their latest meeting on April 21, is to immediately assemble a report for the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) as a follow-up to the GLCA Presidential Summit on Mental Health, which various members of the Task Force attended in December.

The Task Force also decided to halt their efforts to make Kenyon a JED campus. The JED campus program, born from the JED Foundation, is "designed to guide schools through a collaborative process of comprehensive systems, program and policy development with customized support to build upon existing student mental health, substance use and suicide prevention efforts," according to the program website. Among other services, JED conducts a "Healthy Minds" survey at schools to provide the

data that may inform policy recommendations. However, according to the Task Force, Kenyon's Healthy Minds data from the previous survey was "significantly" out of date, and would not account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Task Force also cites the emergence of Talkspace, an online therapy service provided to Kenyon students who reside outside of Ohio, as the reason for its decision to shy away from becoming a JED campus. Kenyon's fiscal partnership with Talkspace will run at least until May of 2021.

Lesser-Roy believes the Task Force is working hard to serve the Kenyon community as best as it can, despite the challenges of communicating virtually during a pandemic.

"I think, in general, I'm really proud of the work that we've done," Lesser-Roy said. "This isn't an issue that can be fixed overnight. And I think the fact that the discussion is happening, and that something like Talkspace is being invested in and is at the forefront of all of our minds is super, super important."

In addition, Talkspace will host a webinar for students at partner schools on Thursday, May 21 from 1-2 p.m. ET. Topics covered will include "adjusting to life at home, returning to campus, remote learning, loss of campus resources, financial hardships, disconnection and more." There will also be a live Q&A session; students wishing to ask a question ahead of time are asked to fill out a form sent to their emails.

## College 2020-21 budget remains uncertain

**ADAM SCHWAGER**  
STAFF WRITER

On Monday, May 11, the Kenyon Board of Trustees met virtually for the second time in three weeks to discuss future plans for dealing with the COVID-19 crisis.

The majority of the May 11 meeting revolved around Kenyon's 2020-21 budget and the different ways it could be affected by the COVID-19 crisis. The Board was presented with several financial models, all depicting various levels of economic disruption.

While in an ideal world, the Board of Trustees would have been able to set an official budget for the upcoming academic year, President Sean Decatur said the Board will continue to meet as the uncertain national situation evolves, however they are "mindful that the College has balanced its budget for 49 consecutive years," according to the Office of Communications' meeting report.

The Board also discussed the impending changes to the Department of Education's Title IX procedures. The new changes, laid out by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos on May 6, must be adopted into practice by August 14. The Board of Trustees' Title IX and Nondiscriminatory Policies Committee will use the coming weeks to propose changes to the College's Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy that will adhere to the new guidelines, and will propose those changes to the full Board in the summer.

After dealing with the timely national issues, the Board moved on to topics that were more Kenyon-specific. They passed a resolution memorializing former Professor of Physics and Provost James Gunton, who died in February at the age of 82. The board also approved Cleveland-based firm Maloney + Novotny LLC to audit Kenyon's financial statements and retirement plans and extended their gratitude to outgoing Provost Joseph Klesner, who will rejoin the faculty and lead the College's next strategic planning process.

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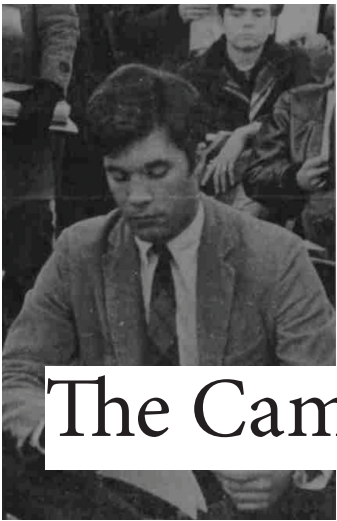
Office: 214 N. Acland Street

Mailing address: *The Kenyon Collegian*, Student Activities Center, Gambier, OH 43022.

Business address: P.O. Box 832, Gambier, OH, 43022.

E-mail address: [collegian@kenyon.edu](mailto:collegian@kenyon.edu), [kenyoncollegian@gmail.com](mailto:kenyoncollegian@gmail.com)





## The Campus Senate: a timeline of waning influence

Since its conception in 1963, the Campus Senate has served as a voice for the Kenyon student body. | GREENSLADE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

**SOPHIE KRICHEVSKY**  
FEATURES EDITOR

**BECCA FOLEY**  
ART DIRECTOR

Kenyon's Campus Senate has historically been the only representative body on campus where students, faculty, staff and administrators come together to discuss campus-wide issues and resolutions. In its 57 years of existence, the Senate has devolved from a body that dictated almost all aspects of student life to a group with little decision making power on campus.

Founded in 1963, Campus Senate was originally intended to be a space where students, faculty members, trustees and administrators could discuss and propose solutions to student concerns. According to the 1964-1965 Course Catalog, Campus Senate had the power to "legislate and to interpret policy regarding student affairs."

The idea to establish a senate came from the College's Self Study Committee, which evaluated many aspects of campus life. The chair of the Self Study Committee was future Charles P. McIlvaine Professor of English Emeritus Perry C. Lentz '64 P '88, who, along with Writer in Residence P.F. Kluge '64, then a junior, was among the first members of Campus Senate. At its founding, the Senate hoped to address a variety of issues on campus, including a debate surrounding "women's hours," which dictated the times at which students were permitted to have female guests in their dorm rooms. In the following years, Campus Senate played a significant role in decisions surrounding campus policies on alcohol, fraternities and housing.

Initially, Campus Senate was to be comprised of five students nominated by the Student Council, three members of the faculty, the Dean of Students and the College Chaplain. Though the Senate would have full legislative powers, the College president could ratify or veto their legislation.

This structure has changed numerous times as the College has evolved over the years. When the Coordinate College for Women at Kenyon College opened in 1969, for instance, the Coordinate College created their own equivalent of Campus Senate, the Coordinate College Council; one member of this council was granted a Senate seat. When the new College Constitution was created in 1972 in order to accommodate the creation of Title IX, it was decided that, just as Kenyon became fully coeducational, campus government would become so as well.

In its prime, Campus Senate's activities were widely discussed among students, and the *Collegian* reported on its deliberations regularly. By the mid-1970s, though, this excitement for the Senate seemed to fade. By 1977, there was talk of eliminating Campus Senate altogether: The so-called "York Proposal," brought forth by the provost, sought to put an end to faculty participation in Senate, which would strip it of much of its power. However, the student body ultimately rallied together to prevent this proposal from passing. The Senate was threatened again in 1991, when Student Council proposed absorbing some of the Senate's legislative powers, which, again, would have all but abolished the Senate. However, this never came to fruition, and the Senate survived.

Throughout the 1990s, Campus Senate continued to enact policy regarding a variety of issues, including the lengthening of library hours, increasing parking availability and even the establishment of what is now Wiggin Street Coffee. When plans for Peirce Dining Hall's renovations were first proposed, a group of female students petitioned the Senate to make it a more inclusive space through the addition of round tables, which are still used in Thomas Hall (New Side) today.

The Senate remained active throughout the 2000s. They voted in favor of a pay raise for students, though it was rejected by the president, created a Senate seat for Greek Council, rewrote Title IX policies, raised the minimum GPA for participation in Greek organizations and drafted the Good Samaritan policy, to name a few.

Though students grew less eager to run for Campus Senate in the early 2010s, the group still continued to create policy. Most notably, the Senate voted to convert all single-stall bathrooms on campus to gender-neutral or gender-inclusive ones in the fall of 2014. The Senate also spent a great deal of time considering what was perhaps the largest campus debate of the time: the College's smoking policy. By the fall of 2012, the Senate began to discuss the creation of designated smoking zones and the removal of ashtrays from trash cans. The policy was approved by both the Senate and the College president, but was never fully enforced.

Upon her return to Kenyon in 2015, Vice President for Student Affairs Meredith Harper Bonham '92 was appointed a seat on the Senate as the College's chief student affairs officer. Despite many past successful initiatives from the Senate, Bonham quickly expressed her concerns for the body's mission. "I think there's a general lack of clarity about the functions of Senate, not only on Senate itself but also within the Kenyon community as a whole," Bonham said in an article from the Dec. 10, 2015 issue of the *Collegian*. "It's worth looking at whether Campus Senate continues to fulfill a need."

In the same article, President Sean Decatur said that he did not think of the Senate as holding much power, but he did not want it eradicated. "I don't think that dissolving Senate would be a good thing for the campus, though it may be the right time to ask whether the structure of Senate is the right structure for us now," he said.

Other members of the Senate, however, were more concerned with the body's actual influence on campus. Associate Professor of English Sarah Heidt '97, who, at the time, was Senate co-chair, expressed concerns about their inability to enact change. "Right now, we're not convinced that we have the ability to affect anything," Heidt said in the same article. "If we're working on something, we hope that it's something that we actually have some ability to affect."

After these concerns about influence and purpose, in spring of 2016, hopes for a revamped Campus Senate were high. Consequently, Colin Cowperthwaite '18, who was student co-chair of Senate at the time, teamed up with Heidt to create a new "Senate 2.0" initiative, which aimed to reduce their overlap with the Student Council and make the Senate more efficient. "It made Senate a more lean and effective decision making body,"

Cowperthwaite wrote in an email to the *Collegian*. "It was also in response to the administration's failure to act upon the Senate's smoking resolution."

Over a year later, in September of 2017, the Senate voted to implement this restructured body. The body was now to consist of six students, two faculty, two administrators and two staff members. The previous year, the Senate had consisted of 11 students and 11 administrators.

After this, the Senate worked to amend their Constitution to clarify their mission. From fall 2017 to spring 2018, a Constitutional Review Committee consisting of Cowperthwaite, Bonham, Student Council President George Costanzo '19, Dean of Campus Life Laura Kane and Associate Professor of Economics PJ Glandon worked on a new draft that specified the role of the Senate. However, the Committee did not always see eye to eye.

"At the beginning of the process, I submitted a draft Constitution which preserved Senate's legislative role but this was dismissed out of hand," Cowperthwaite wrote to the *Collegian*. "Instead, [Kane] wrote the Constitution and we would come to humbly offer our comments. When I and other students objected to the removal of the Senate's purview of many Student Handbook policies, [Bonham] would dissemble and claim that the Senate did not have a legislative role despite the language in the original constitution and that it's[sic] purpose was not to focus on student issues but only those affecting the whole campus community."

The 2018 Constitution drafted by Kane gave Senate far less power than the 2016 edition. In the 2016 Constitution, the Senate was granted the power to "legislate within the jurisdiction of the Campus Government rules for the regulation of student life and extracurricular activities," and it had "exclusive power" to do so. In 2018, however, the Constitution states that Campus Senate has the power to "deliberate and to adopt policy recommendations on whatever matters are of general importance to the broader campus community and to forward such considerations to the appropriate campus body and/or administrative office."

This new Constitution was not voted on until the fall of 2018, after Cowperthwaite, one of the strongest advocates for a revised Constitution, had already graduated. "I believe that this was done to freeze me out so that I could not speak out or organize students against the removal of our oversight powers before the vote," Cowperthwaite wrote to the *Collegian*.

Since approving the new constitution, Campus Senate has been primarily focused on drafting a protest policy. Professor of Mathematics Bob Milnikel, outgoing faculty co-chair of the Senate, said that the process for drafting and proposing the policy took almost a year. "Senate has no legislative authority, but we obtained endorsements of our final proposed policy from [Student Council, Staff Council, and Faculty Meeting] before presenting it to Senior Staff for implementation," he wrote in an email to the *Collegian*. Other Senate actions in recent years include giving feedback on new Title IX policies and the College's new mission statement, consulting about Honors Day awards and helping to draft an accessibility state-

ment.

These recent undertakings, however, are not nearly as large as some of the projects that the Senate used to take on. When in recent years, Bonham has been asked about the shrinking role of Campus Senate, she has explained that more of the issues previously handled in Senate are now handled by adults in hired positions.

"For example, if there is a question or concern about housing and residential life that now just simply goes to the Director of Housing and Residential Life," Bonham said in a September 2016 article of the *Collegian*. "Whereas before that might have been an issue Campus Senate took up and then brought to the dean of students." However, housing at Kenyon has been overseen by a Director of Housing (today known as the Director for Residential Life), a paid employee, as early as 1974, if not earlier.

Following recent administrative revisions of the Student Handbook, an open forum was hosted last week to gather feedback. The forum included discussions of changes in the investigation processes and the formal prohibition of new local Greek organizations on campus—all done without Senate approval. As many students and alumni—Cowperthwaite included—pointed out, important campus decisions should not be made without Senate approval. They therefore used the forum to address the need for the Senate to regain the power that it had lost.

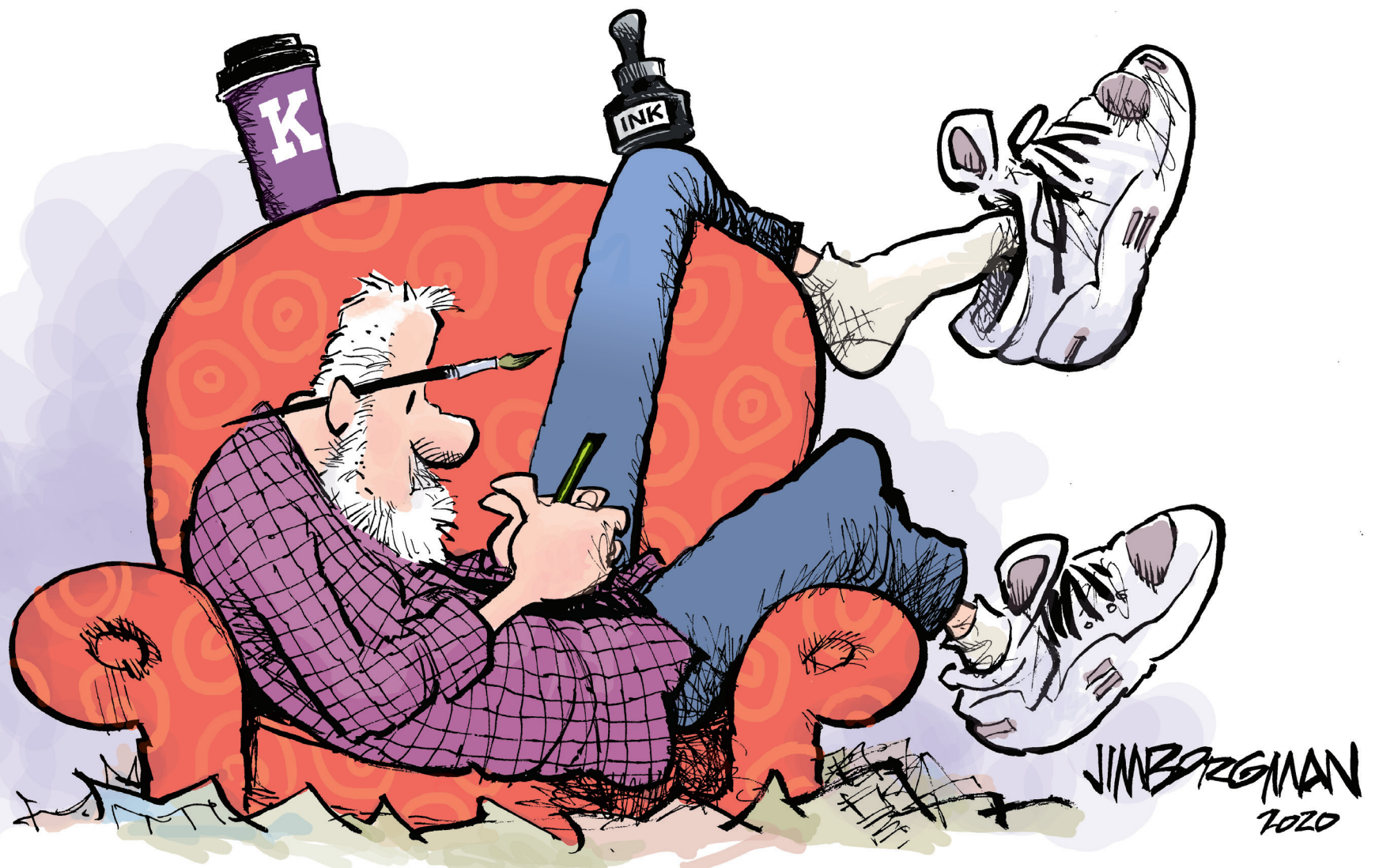
Cowperthwaite expressed concerns about these open forums not actually enacting real change. "In all of the forums, Senate and Council meetings, and personal conversations I cannot recall a single time the administration has truly reversed course on any policy of real import in response to students' dissent," he wrote in an email to the *Collegian*. "At best students can delay. And when the only power in government is the power to delay it is no wonder that students are not lining up to participate."

Cowperthwaite believes that asking for student input in such forums alone is not enough to solve the current issues. He hopes that despite never being able to overrule the administration, the Senate will be given opportunities to have a vote for initiatives like the Student Handbook in order to "formally register" the attitudes of the student body. "Students must demand an opportunity to vote so that it is clear to the community and the historical record when the administration is actually listening to students and when it is decidedly not," Cowperthwaite wrote to the *Collegian*.

However, Bonham does not see much of a need for the Senate to alter its current role. "Moving forward, my hope is that [Campus Senate] will continue to function in the same healthy and productive manner, and that if any future tweaks are necessary, Senate will discuss and debate them," she wrote in an email to the *Collegian*.

Even as some view Campus Senate as an ineffective body that does not continue "to fulfill a need" on campus, it has survived at Kenyon as a vehicle for student voices. Despite its diminishing power, students and recent alumni are fighting to restore the Senate to its decisive roots.





Jim Borgman '76 drew himself as his *Zits* character, Jeremy. This is the first cartoon Borgman has drawn for the *Collegian* since his graduation. | JIM BORGMAN

## Oasis in the desert: a conversation with Jim Borgman '76

ALEX GILKEY  
CARTOONIST

BECCA FOLEY  
ART DIRECTOR

The comics section of a newspaper has been a favorite part of readers' morning routines for generations. The comic strip *Zits* is one of the most successful to enter the arena. Attracting 200 million daily readers, *Zits* has been published in 1,600 newspapers in 45 countries and translated into 15 languages. Kenyon alumnus and former *Collegian* cartoonist Jim Borgman '76 P' 12 H '88 has been there since the beginning.

Alongside fellow writer and cartoonist Jerry Scott, Borgman has drawn *Zits* since 1997. For the last 23 years, Borgman has drawn 16-year-old Jerney Duncan as he navigates high school along with his screen-obsessed friends, his on-again off-again girlfriend Sara and his parents, who struggle to weed through his dirty laundry jungle of a room.

Borgman was raised in the west side neighborhood of Price Hill in Cincinnati, Ohio. Growing up, he recounts watching his father paint signs on the outside of moving vans and beer trucks, "osmosing the beauty and qualities of lettering." His mother stayed home to care for him, his brother and his two sisters. As Borgman approached the end of his time at Elder High School, he noticed a book with a purple spine in his college counselors office: the Kenyon College catalogue. This early 1970s Kenyon catalogue intrigued Borgman and, after a tour that included auditing a class on Shakespeare in Philomathean Hall, Kenyon ended up being his only college tour. In the fall of 1972, he ascended the "magic mountain" of

Gambier.

Anticipating an English degree but ultimately becoming an art major, Borgman spent much of his time at Kenyon trekking back and forth between Old Kenyon and Bexley Hall, where the Art Department once resided. Kenyon's ivy-covered walls, weekend films and occasional tennis-court parties contributed to his warm memories of campus life. He met his first wife Lynn Goodwin '76 on campus and the two married several years later.

Borgman's cartooning career began in the middle of his junior year, when *Collegian* writer Richard West '76 asked him to illustrate a several-part series on famous Kenyon alumni. After that, Borgman asked *Collegian* editor Matthew Winkler '77 P' 13 H '00 if he could begin drawing weekly cartoons, and Winkler agreed. One of Borgman's first cartoons was in response to an incident during the summer of 1975, when a Campus Safety officer shot and killed a student's cat. In the cartoon, Borgman depicted four felines as 1920s mobsters, complete with fedoras, tommy guns and zoot suits. By using Kenyon-specific events as inspiration, Borgman did more than political cartooning: He depicted student experiences through caricature.

Since resources on newspaper cartooning were scarce, Borgman's cartooning ability is largely self-taught. In the beginning, he used scratchy pens and India ink, which he typically found in his art classes. When he made a mistake, white-out was an easy fix. Once a drawing was complete, Borgman would drop the cartoon off at the *Collegian* offices, where a large camera copied the drawings

that were placed into an issue. Borgman said he still follows the same process today: Starting with a pencil drawing, he inks the outline of objects and characters with a brush before using Micron pens to add detail. The only considerable change in his process after nearly 50 years of drawing is that he now uses Photoshop for coloring before sending out the final work.

Borgman's style of drawing was influenced by 19th-century cartoons shown to him by West, but more largely by the works of contemporary editorial cartoonists Jeff MacNally and Pat Oliphant, who would eventually inspire Borgman to "take the camera into average people's homes" to reflect on how larger policy issues affected everyday citizens. Borgman's drawing style was additionally influenced by the liberal arts education he received at Kenyon. Taking theater classes helped him learn to "set the scene" of a cartoon. Borgman also talked about how Kenyon made him think critically.

"I really do believe that Kenyon gave [me] a curiosity about the world, a sort of devil's advocate voice, challenging assumptions," he said. "I don't know how they did it, but I really do think my teachers did that for me. It served me not only as a human being, but it's served me in my profession really well."

As his graduation drew closer, Borgman prepared to enter the world of professional editorial cartooning. Halfway through his senior year, he compiled three packages of his *Collegian* cartoons. First, he gave one copy to West, who knew a cartoonist in Philadelphia. He then mailed two copies to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*—one to editor Tom Gebhart and

the other to retiring cartoonist L.D. Warren. On a visit home to Cincinnati during winter break, Borgman was able to secure lunch with an *Enquirer* editor, and brought the same cartoons he had mailed to Gebhart and Warren. After lunch, the editor brought Borgman's work to Gebhart, who, oddly enough, had just received the same packet Borgman sent in the mail. Later, Warren too received his mailed set of cartoons. Warren brought the package into Gebhart's office where he found that, by absolute coincidence, West's cartoonist friend in Philadelphia had also sent Gebhart a copy of Borgman's cartoons. In the end, Gebhart received the four identical packets of Borgman's work from four different sources. Borgman got an interview and landed the job, beginning one week after he graduated in 1976.

When he was hired, Borgman had drawn about 20 cartoons in his life, all for the *Collegian*. He quickly surpassed that amount within his first few weeks at the *Enquirer*, drawing six cartoons per week. Soon after he started, political differences with his fellow staff made him feel out of place. Being a progressive cartoonist at the conservative *Enquirer*, Borgman avoided political debates, both at work and in his cartoons.

"I wasn't a bomb-thrower, my mind was just wandering in a different direction," he said.

But after two years it became clear that his views and those at the *Enquirer* "weren't jiving." After receiving another job offer, Borgman went to Gebhart and said he would understand if the *Enquirer* wished to part ways with him. However, Gebhart and other editors had a different idea.

They believed Borgman had brought readers back to the newspaper who had been turned off by the editorial page's conservative content. Realizing that Borgman would produce his best work if unrestricted by ideology, they encouraged him to express his own views. For this, Borgman is grateful.

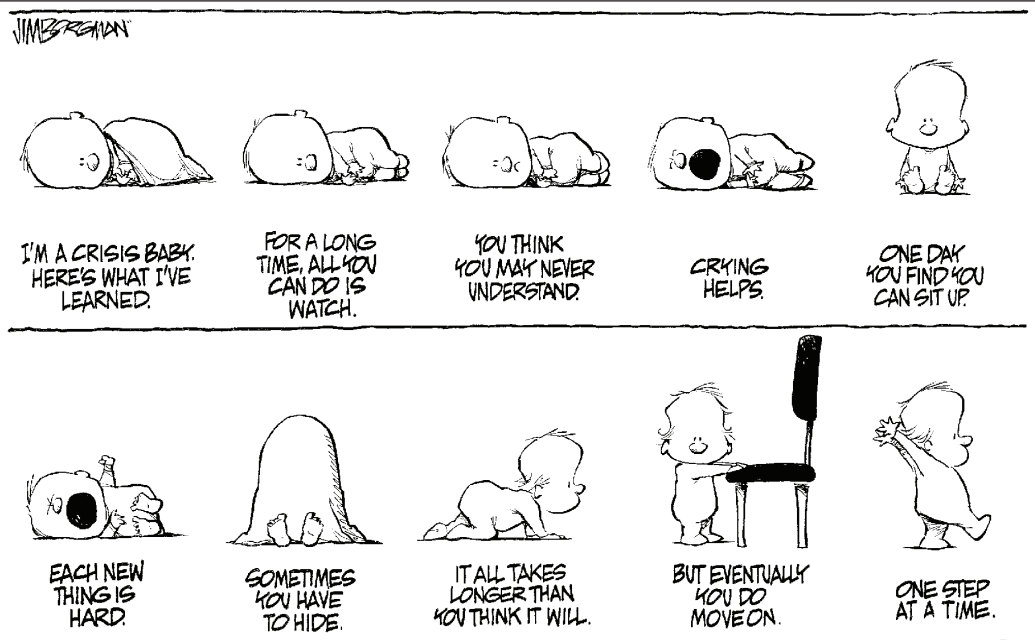
"I give them so much credit. Many, many newspapers did not ever treat their cartoonists that way," Borgman said.

Borgman's work not only influenced his daily readers, but it also influenced a young freshman who came to Kenyon the year after he graduated. Borgman met Bill Watterson '80 when he visited Kenyon from Cincinnati. By this time, Winkler had taken Watterson under his wing as the new *Collegian* cartoonist. His memories with Watterson primarily consisted of "pizza and laughing." After graduating, Watterson continued to follow in Borgman's footsteps when he became an editorial cartoonist at the *Cincinnati Post*, Borgman's cross-town rival. However, Watterson found himself more suited to drawing cartoons in strip format than for editorials and left after only a few months. Watterson went on to create the renowned *Calvin and Hobbes* and remained in close contact with Borgman for many years after.

Borgman's work at the *Enquirer* earned him a Pulitzer Prize in 1991, and he continued to draw cartoons there for another 30 years until retiring in 2008.

After almost 20 years at the *Enquirer*, a flat tire significantly changed his cartooning career. In 1995, en route to a National Cartoonist Society conference in Florida, both Borgman (who was travelling from ► page 5





Left: One of Borgman's first cartoons for the *Collegian*. Right: Borgman created this cartoon as a response for 9/11 but has updated it to reflect the COVID-19 crisis.

## The creator of *Zits* shares how Kenyon shaped his cartoons

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Cincinnati) and fellow cartoonist Jerry Scott (travelling from Phoenix) had a layover in Atlanta and boarded the same flight. Even though they knew of each other at the time, they barely knew each other personally. The plane promptly blew a tire on the runway, and by the end of the five hours that the passengers spent sitting on the tarmac, the two cartoonists had become good friends.

One year later, Borgman traveled to Arizona to deliver a talk and wanted to spend a few extra days away from harsh February weather in Cincinnati, so he called Scott for local travel suggestions. Scott first recommended a charming inn near Sedona before inviting himself along. Traveling to Sedona, Scott said to Borgman "the only thing is there's a ground rule here: We're not gonna talk about work." After three days of hiking, Scott walked over to Borgman's cabin, sketchbook in hand, saying, "I know we're not supposed to talk about work, but I'm trying to do this comic strip about a teenager." Scott thought the drawings weren't coming out the way he wanted them to. Having worked on comic strips in

which the primary characters were small children with large heads and small bodies, Scott drew his teenage characters in the same fashion. Borgman, whose son was 15 at the time, quickly replied, "That's not the way teenagers look. They're long, lanky, [and] drape themselves over furniture," and began drawing. Immediately, Scott knew Borgman had the right idea, but said he couldn't draw the same way. After returning home the two began the comic now known as *Zits*, faxing suggestions about characters back and forth.

Borgman found immense value in working with Scott. "I had never been successful in writing a comic strip. I thought about doing it and would like to do it, but I didn't know how to create characters or write in that short format that a comic strip requires," Borgman said. "[Scott] knew all that, and he liked my way of expressing it."

After several months of exchanging ideas, Scott and Borgman showed the idea to King Features Syndicate editor Jay Kennedy, who gave it final approval for publishing it in newspapers. When the first *Zits* comic appeared in the paper on July 7, 1997, it became an instant hit. Borgman

attributes *Zits'* early success to an "unaddressed niche" for teenage humor comics. Previous strips such as Archie were still around, but were set in the 1950s and lacked *Zits'* tone. As their children grew into adulthood and the cartoonists began to lack first-hand inspiration, Borgman and Scott feared they would become out of touch with modern teenagers. Thankfully, he is reassured that the *Zits* cast of characters are accepted as "their idea of teenagers" by their audience, even if modern teens stop saying "dude."

The characters' personalities are not the only thing that has changed over time; on Aug. 23, 2009, Jeremy finally got his driver's license, signifying his 16th birthday after being 15 for over a decade.

"We had him turn 16 because we wanted him to drive," Borgman explained, as giving Jeremy a license expanded their palette of ideas. He describes Jeremy's age as "glacial," but now thinks of him more as a 17 year old.

When asked if Jeremy would ever attend Kenyon, Borgman laughed and said they'll consider sending him to college if they choose to wrap up the strip. For now, the strip will con-

tinue to focus on high school life. This hasn't stopped Borgman from referencing Kenyon in *Zits*, though. On mugs, T-shirts and when characters visit college fairs, he likes to slip Kenyon in as an homage.

"Kenyon is my idea of the college I'd like for everyone, so if we ever chose to take Jeremy to college, it's safe to say it'd look a lot like Kenyon does," Borgman assured.

Borgman returned to Kenyon in 1988 and 1991 to give Commencement addresses. In his 1991 speech "Where Do You Get Your Ideas? Some Thoughts on Creativity," he brought illustrations which were handed out to the entire audience during his speech. His daughter Chelsea graduated in 2012.

Just as the COVID-19 crisis has changed the content of news stories, the content of their accompanying cartoons has changed as well. At the beginning of the crisis, Borgman and Scott realized they would need to alter their approach, and began pulling strips from publication that could appear insensitive to those sheltering-in-place. Strips with large parties or other activities that could appear out of touch during times of social distancing were pulled and replaced with

substitutes. However, Borgman says the new strips will not necessarily be a reflection of the response to the pandemic; he wants *Zits* to maintain a sense of normalcy for its readers.

"We're not overtly dealing with the virus," Borgman explained. "We think people [will] have had enough of [COVID-19] by the time they get to the comics page, and would rather have that be an oasis."

During the current crisis, Borgman has continued to draw cartoons from his in-home studio near the mountains of Boulder, Colo., where he and his wife, Suzanne, moved 10 years ago. The light-filled studio contains several pieces of memorabilia, including a collection of Cincinnati Reds baseballs, a pair of *Zits* boxer shorts hung on the wall and a paper-mache rhino mask with a horn made of wine corks. He has kept the same drawing board since his first day at the *Enquirer* 44 years ago.

Borgman and Scott continue to collaborate on *Zits*, and someday, readers may finally see Jeremy Duncan at freshman move-in day. If he continues to age at his current rate, we should expect him at Kenyon in August, 2033 and see him graduate in May, 2070.

## Class of 2020 finds creative ways to celebrate graduation

DORA SEGALL  
STAFF WRITER

When Kenyon announced that it would conduct classes online for the rest of the school year, many seniors were disappointed that their time on the Hill had come to a premature end and that they would miss definitive events like Summer Sendoff and Senior Week.

Although the College will hold a virtual Commencement on May 29 and an in-person ceremony at a later date, many students found ways to celebrate their graduation off-campus with their families. The *Collegian* spoke with three of these seniors in the week leading up to the ceremony originally scheduled for this past Saturday.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, Harper Beeland '20 had not expected to spend graduation day with his parents, as his younger sister's high school graduation was scheduled for the same date.

"My parents called me and [said they didn't] want to have to make [us] choose," Beeland

said. "I was like, 'I mean, I've already had a high school graduation, so I guess you should just go to hers.'"

Instead, his parents had planned to visit campus the weekend before Commencement and set up a canopy tent outside of his North Campus Apartment, where they were going to invite Beeland's friends to share a meal with them.

When they learned that Commencement would no longer occur on campus as planned, the family decided to pitch the tent in their driveway in Chattanooga, Tenn. on the day of graduation instead. They celebrated with a charcuterie board and drinks while waving to a few family friends, who had driven by to congratulate Beeland and his sister.

Although he is frustrated to be graduating without the company of his friends, Beeland is glad to have spent the weekend with his family. "I get to have somebody say 'congratulations' to me, [which] just makes it feel more fruitful that I'm finishing my last semester of college,"

Beeland said. "It's something tangible to show for it."

While Beeland had a substitute graduation with his family, Vahni Kurra '20 celebrated away from hers. When at first it was believed that Kenyon would resume classes on campus in April, Kurra's parents, who live far from Kenyon in Rapid City, S.D., initially thought it would be a good idea for her to stay with family friends, Scott and Nancy, in Columbus. When Ohio enacted a stay-at-home order, however, her stay at the couple's house extended indefinitely. Last week, in anticipation of graduation, Scott and Nancy ordered a celebratory sign to put in their front lawn.

"It was really touching," Kurra said. "It came in the mail and I was like, 'What is this?' And then I opened it up and I was like, 'Oh, so sweet!'"

On Saturday, Kurra, Scott and Nancy held a small celebration and invited Vahni's friend from high school to spend some time with her on the porch. In addition to FaceTiming her

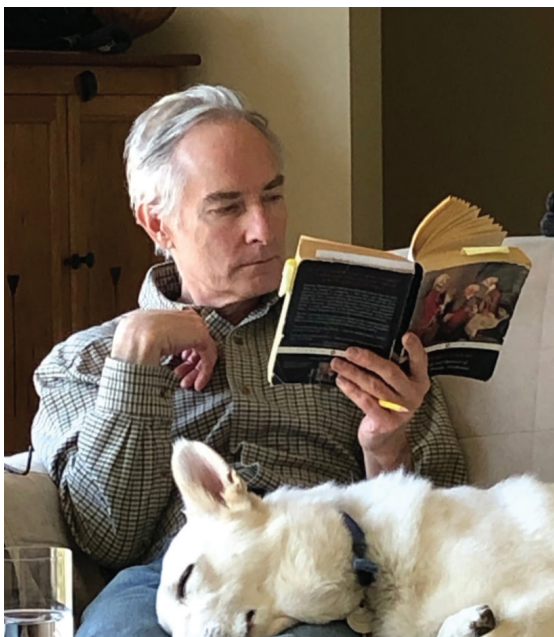
parents later that evening, upon Kurra's request, the middle-aged couple agreed to play beer pong with her.

"I was really shocked [that they agreed]," she said. "I was like, 'This is gonna get a hard 'no.' [But] Scott was like, 'You know what? Let's do it. Let's finish college right.'"

Haley Witschey '20, who is also spending the quarantine in Ohio, decided to journey back to Gambier this Saturday with her parents, three year old niece and three sisters to order takeout from the Village Inn and have a picnic and champagne by the Kokosing. Afterwards, she and her niece swam in the river. "It was freezing in the water, but she loved it," Witschey said.

Although she sometimes experiences waves of sadness about missing out on a traditional graduation experience, Witschey is trying to make the most of the situation. "I think just graduating now is so weird for all of us across the country—across the world," she said. "We're gonna go down in history at least."





## Retiring professors reflect on time at Kenyon

Above: Writer in Residence P.F. Kluge '64, Professor of English Jim Carson and Professor of French Mary Jane Cowles. | COURTESY OF KENYON.EDU AND PROFESSORS

**JOSEPH POZO**  
STAFF WRITER

As the spring semester comes to a close, the Kenyon community bids farewell to six retiring professors, each of whom has contributed significantly to Kenyon's vibrant academic environment for many years.

While these professors' backgrounds vary widely, they have all been united by their passions and their fond memories of Kenyon.

Professor of Psychology Allan Fenigstein began his career at Kenyon in 1974, and later worked as a visiting professor in other institutions in various countries, including Iceland, Czechia and England. In his 47 years of working at Kenyon, Professor Fenigstein witnessed the College evolve into what it is today; an institution that emphasizes research and scholarship. Looking back on his time on the Hill, Fenigstein believes that one aspect of Kenyon that has always spurred the best in students is the location in which they grow as intellectuals. Fenigstein deeply values the time he has shared with his students and colleagues, and will miss them dearly.

"[My favorite moments at Kenyon are] the 'ah hah, I get it!' moments that students have shared with me, [and] the lifelong friendship of former students, and the collegiality and friendship of colleagues," he wrote in an email to the

*Collegian*.

Even as Kenyon constructs new buildings and looks to the future, Professor Fenigstein believes "the beauty of the campus remains intact." He offers his hope that Kenyon students will continue to exercise their creative minds, both in and outside of the classroom.

"[Although] students have improved, they have become better at studying for exams, and much less likely to exercise independent and creative thinking," Fenigstein cautioned.

During his retirement, Fenigstein hopes to continue his research while spending his newfound time with family and friends.

Writer in Residence P.F. Kluge '64 is also retiring this year. Kluge's relationship with Kenyon began as a first-year student in 1960. In 1987, he returned as a professor and the College's writer in residence, going on to publish *Alma Mater* in 1993, a work depicting a year at Kenyon.

Kluge hopes that in the years after his retirement, dialogue "between professors and students [will still] be the essence of a Kenyon experience." Kluge will remain in Gambier during his retirement, where he hopes to continue reading, writing, gardening and walking along the Kokosing River: a continuation of his 60 years of life at Kenyon that began back in 1960.

Like Fenigstein, Kluge voiced concern about the level of students' intel-

lectual engagement, admitting that while Kenyon offered him a "potentially deep, possibly life-changing connection with his students," many do not utilize the resources available to them. Kluge wishes that more Kenyon students would take advantage of faculty office hours and the creative and academic benefits they provide.

Having attended a liberal arts college in a town similar to Gambier, Professor of French Mary Jane Cowles knew what Kenyon had in store for her when she first arrived on the Hill in 1989. Now, as she prepares to depart after three decades, Cowles plans to continue her research in retirement, and to travel with her family and improve her oboe skills in her spare time. Whether it includes learning new languages, hiking or getting back into her favorite sports, Cowles' retirement will be spent the same way she led her professional life: searching for new information.

When looking back on her time at Kenyon, Cowles remarks that some of her favorite moments weren't always the easiest ones. One of these moments was her time managing tryouts for Assistant Teacher (AT) positions, which she described as "a marathon event."

"It was fun to see the students' creativity at work and spend long sessions with colleagues. It was hard work, but we shared a lot of laughter as well," Cowles recounted.

Cowles also appreciates the time

that she invited students of her Myth and Meaning of the French Revolution (FREN 353) class to share a Napoleonic-style meal in her home.

Kenyon's Department of English will witness a well-known couple retire this year as Professor of English Jim Carson and Associate Professor of English Deborah Laycock prepare to depart from the Hill.

Professor Carson's favorite memories at Kenyon are those spent working individually with students, whether advising or supervising their honors theses. Originally attracted to Kenyon's beauty, he hopes that Kenyon becomes "the village and community that we once were."

Though Professor Carson will not be teaching English in Lentz House this coming fall, he will still often be found cycling in the Kenyon Athletic Center. Professor Carson is also looking forward to spending time with Professor Laycock, and his white German Shepherd, Annie.

While Kenyon professors will come and go over the years, these professors are confident that the Kenyon they knew will continue to be a source of academic growth and an enabler of creative expression for years to come.

*Professor of History Bruce Kinzer and Associate Professor of English Deborah Laycock, who are also retiring this year, could not be reached for comment.*



Associate Prof. of English Deborah Laycock, Prof. of Psychology Allan Fenigstein and Prof. of History Bruce Kinzer. | COURTESY OF KENYON.EDU AND PROFESSORS



# Remembering boil alerts: campus crises of the recent past

SOPHIE KRICHEVSKY  
FEATURES EDITOR

Towards the beginning of the pandemic when safety measures still seemed temporary, many Kenyon students found themselves re-counting campus crises of years past. Among these was the two-part, two-day-long power outage in November of 2018, which resulted in a day of canceled classes, or when the polar vortex hit the Midwest in January of 2019, and students were shuttled from their dorms to Peirce Dining Hall to avoid the extreme cold. But for current seniors and recent alumni, the most memorable and Kenyon-specific of these campus emergencies are the boil alerts.

A boil alert occurs when tap water is deemed unsafe to drink. This can happen as a result of burst pipes during construction, pipe erosion or drops in pressure at treatment plants. In order to consume tap water during these emergencies, students must first boil the water to purify it— hence the name.

The first documented boil alert in Kenyon’s history occurred in 2008, when a water main break caused a three-day boil alert. According to one April 2008 *Collegian* article reporting the alert, the school went through more than 5,000 plastic water bottles in that three-day span.

From April 2016 to May 2017, boil alerts became a regular occurrence on campus; during this period, Gambier experienced six boil alerts. At first, students were unsure of what precautions to take.

“There initially was confusion about [boil alerts]: ‘Can we brush our teeth [normally], or do we have to boil water before we brush our teeth? Can we shower as long as we don’t consume the water? How bad is it?’” recalled Mary Liz Brady ’18. “In talking to other people... [we gathered the alert] was more of a precaution.”

Audrey Neubauer ’19, who once drank

contaminated tap water in protest of the alerts’ high plastic waste production, agreed. “[After six boil alerts], they felt unnecessary, and it was clear that the school didn’t want to be held liable for anything.”

Boil alerts had a way of occurring at the worst possible times. The first in this string of boil alerts, for instance, happened to coincide with Admitted Students Weekend 2016, when many, including Lizzie Boyle ’19, were hosting prospective students.

“[My prospective student] just really was not impressed when we were like, ‘Welcome to Kenyon! Don’t drink the water!’” Boyle said. Unsurprisingly, the student did not choose to attend Kenyon in the fall.

The class of 2020 was introduced to boil alerts before they even set foot on campus. On July 7, 2016, Alexis Reape ’20 received her third-ever Kenyon email, second only to her advisor and roommate assignments: It was a boil alert. At the time, she and her fellow incoming first years did not know what this meant. But by November 3, 2016, when the class of 2020 experienced their first boil alert on campus, they had their answer.

“[For first-year students,] first semester is so weird, because everything’s so new,” Reape said. When the first boil alert occurred, she said, “I think a lot of us were [thinking,] ‘What did we get ourselves into?’”

During this particular boil alert, Reape recalled her Community Advisor putting masking tape on the water fountain to discourage anyone from using it. But it’s unlikely that students were drinking much water at this point; when the boil alert went into effect at 11:44 p.m., many students were engrossed in Game 7 of the 2016 World Series, when the Cubs won the World Series for the first time in 108 years.

Despite the circumstances, students managed to find humor in boil alerts; campus was abuzz as students laughed at the situa-



Many students used their new CHIPs water bottles to store boiled water during a boil alert, resulting in melted bottles. | COURTESY OF THE KENYON THRILL

tion. Only days after the Celebration of High-Impact Practices (CHIPs), the academic fair known to hand out free bags of chips and reusable water bottles, the College had yet another boil alert. In hopes of avoiding disposable plastic water bottles, many students used their brand new CHIPs bottles, with less than ideal results.

“People would boil their water in tea kettles, and then dump it into these cheap water bottles, and they melted,” Brady laughed. “Clearly, they were not made for that.” A photo of one melted bottle quickly went viral on

the Kenyon Thrill’s Instagram page. The following Halloween, Boyle even dressed up as a “Boyle alert.”

Although boil alerts were cumbersome at times, the circumstances fostered a sense of absurdity that united the student body, which is ultimately what made them memorable.

“All small institutions [like Kenyon] are kind of culty in the same way,” Boyle said. “It’s the weird, oddly specific stuff [like boil alerts] that—[though they] ultimately have no bearing on your overall college experience—is a bonding exercise.”

CLASS CLASH		compiled by Ariella Kissin and Sophie Krichevsky			
		Senior Class Total:		Junior Class Total:	
		34		44	
		Izzy Kotlowitz '20		Ezra Moguel '21	
		Sophomore Class Total:		First-Year Class Total:	
		27		28	
		Sarah Siegal '22		Sally Smith '23	
Answer		16 (± 5 is acceptable.)		25	
How many Opinion pieces has Professor Fred Baumann written for the <i>Collegian</i> throughout his Kenyon career?		20		24	
Last week, author Colson Whitehead became the fourth person in history to win two Pulitzer Prizes for Fiction. Name one of the other three authors who did so.		John Green		Toni Morrison	
What country is known to have the world's tallest population?		Toni Morrison		John Green	
The first police car in the United States was used in what Ohio city?		Sweden		The Netherlands	
		The Netherlands		The Netherlands	
		Akron		Cleveland	
		Cleveland		Akron	
Weekly Scores		1		1	
		3			



# Carley Townsend's '20 stop-motion film wows at Trinity Film Fest

MIKAYLA CONNOLLY  
ARTS EDITOR

The Trinity Film Fest is a national competition for collegiate filmmakers across the world. This past weekend, the festival held a virtual screening of 17 films that were chosen as finalists, two of which were the work of Kenyon students. Last week, we profiled Natalie Berger's '20 and Sam Brodsky's '21 documentary *Closure*. This week, the *Collegian* looks at the other film included in the festival, *Ordinary Day* by Carley Townsend '20. It follows the daily routine of an "elderly, posh cassette tape" who is stuck watching television each and every day of her mundane life. The film's description on YouTube asks, "What happens when you're overwhelmed by the same monotony, day by day?"

The stop-motion film opens with a close-up of a tiny TV and other props around the living room, crafted from tin foil, clay, paper and similar materials, as well as the main character, the cassette tape. The tape sits in her

living room, covered in tin foil to emphasize her facial expression and wearing a hat. "She [the tape] grabs the remote and starts switching through channels when a program about outer space catches her attention," Townsend described in an email to the *Collegian*. "She begins to imagine herself in space, and her imagination transports herself there, only for her to be brought back to the mundane reality that is the overwhelming boredom of watching TV each and every day."

A film of less than two minutes, it was originally an assignment for Professor Esslinger's Still/Moving: Stop-Motion Animation class (ARTS 264). "Esslinger told us to find household items to use in our film. I found a few things at Goodwill as well as a Fieldmedic cassette tape that my friend had given to me after I missed his concert at the Horn [Gallery] a couple years ago," Townsend wrote.

The short film takes inspiration from the life of Townsend's grandmother, which it is loosely based on. "Toward the end of her life, [she] became forgetful and could



A screenshot from Townsend's short film *Ordinary Day*, which is available on YouTube.

really only manage making herself meals and watching television. It's a bit grim, but this memory of her really sticks in my mind," Townsend said.

The cassette tape in the film represents Townsend's grandmother using her imagination to transport herself elsewhere. The use of tinfoil, specifically wrinkled tinfoil, for the cassette alludes to

old age.

The stop-motion film features a variety of materials, lighting and audio. After a few weeks of conceptualizing and producing the film, Townsend estimates the total project took at least 20 hours of actual filming and 10 hours of editing. Having only recently fallen in love with filmmaking, Townsend said that it's "so exciting to cre-

ate my own project, do all the research and then to go out and make it happen."

Townsend would like to express that she is grateful for the support of her friends and loved ones, as well as such an opportunity to be creative. She encourages anyone curious about filmmaking to try it. "I think they'd be surprised by what they can do," she said.

## Studio art majors showcase senior projects in virtual exhibition

FREDRIKE GIRON-GIESSEN  
ARTS EDITOR

As the spring semester comes to a close, seniors have found creative ways to present their final projects on online platforms. While the Department of Film uploaded the five senior films on Vimeo and hosted a Q&A on Zoom, the Department of Studio Art took a different approach.

On Thursday, May 7, an email was sent out to the student body announcing the opening of the 2020 Annual Senior Student Exhibition. Clicking on the attached email link transports one to a professionally curated website featuring the work of the 21 studio art majors.

Created by Miles Shebar '20 with the help of Katrina Peterson '20 and Jane Zisman '20, the online exhibition includes pictures of the artists with samples of their artwork. Some artists have even uploaded 3D models of their exhibitions, which would normally be displayed in the Gund Gallery. The website garnered 17,000 views in the first seven hours of its opening, according to Sarah Townsend '20.

The artists agreed that a Zoom presentation of the artwork would be more restrictive, and felt that a website could better mimic the feeling of a gallery. In regards to creating the online exhibition, Shebar, the head designer of the website, said in an email to the *Collegian*, "The department had initially presented us with a design for the website, but me and a few other seniors decided that we wanted to build it on our own in order to have a little more creative freedom over how our work was presented." The work in the Senior Exhibition spans practically every medium.

Alex Beatty '20 constructed a roly-poly out of plywood in a project called *Armadillidiidae*. The wooden structure emulates the folding of the bug, which fascinated Beatty as a child, as well as many children growing up. Beatty made this structure so that it could be "experienced by adults with the same degree of excitement and wonder experienced by my childhood self."

In *Memoryscapes*, Alec Clothier '20 confronts identity, using luan, poplar, enamel paint and paint markers to construct layers of brightly colored mountain ranges.

Each set represents "the everlasting nature of the emotional associations I've connected with my homes," Clothier writes in his description.

In an email to the *Collegian*, Clothier described the difficulty of finishing the piece at home in his "small, poorly lit, poorly ventilated and extremely crowded garage space," rather than the bright, spacious Higley Hall studio. "On nice days I could open the garage door to let fresh air in," Clothier said, "but on bad days I just hoped that the fumes from my various paints wouldn't suffocate me."

Daniela Grande '20, in a photo series entitled *multiple trace*, explores how the neuroscience theory of "multiple trace" can be documented through rhythm and color. Grande took photos through a car window of "vast spaces between cities as well as time" and digitally stitched separate moments from the drive into one picture. In an email to the *Collegian*, Grande said that she had initially planned on making a large-scale installation but submitted the work as photographs instead. Grande also runs the Senior Art Majors Instagram account, which will soon be hosting an upcoming

live Q&A with the artists.

Lucy Irwin '20 uses oil on canvas for the three portraits of *My Favorite Strangers*. According to Irwin's project description, the images of the three Peirce Dining Hall workers depict "the complexity of these important yet largely overlooked relationships that many of us have throughout our lifetimes."

Madeline Lockyer '20 sewed together Goodwill children's clothing and dyed fabrics for the elaborate installation entitled *Cancerous Blooms*. In an interview with the *Collegian*, Lockyer detailed the process, which included a lot of research. "Most people don't equate art work with biology," Lockyer wrote, "but my piece took a lot of biology research looking into cyanobacteria cells and what feeds them." Lockyer hand-sewed the pieces of fabric into the shape of the western basin of Lake Erie. In the description on the website, Lockyer elaborates, "The tiny circles from the clothing have been sewn together to form the crawling cancers, growing outward on the wall."

Katrina Peterson '20 created hyper-realistic still life portraits using oil on canvas for her project *Stilted Life*. Peterson draws inspiration from 16th-18th century Dutch still lifes, and instead of depicting fruits and wine on a delicately draped table, Peterson paints beers, a bong and Calvin Klein underwear. "Through placement of objects and style of rendering, I play with shock value and cultural understanding to construct a humorous interpretation of youthful lifestyles in the era of Postmodernity."

Miles Shebar '20 created an installation with sound effects that would have been presented in the Gund Gallery. The online version of *Memory Cloud* comes

with a blueprint of the layout and a sample of the audio. Shebar uses speakers to play the recordings of every question he's ever asked his Google Assistant over the past four years. In Shebar's project description, he writes about how people's relationship with technology has become personal, "They capture me at moments of quiet intimacy and boisterous energy."

Making the final product at home in New York, Shebar came to terms with the limitations of construction. "Although I couldn't physically realize the project at the scale I'd wanted, the structural elements were enough to fabricate a functioning prototype," he explained in an email to the *Collegian*. Shebar also used money from his senior art fund to get the electronics that would've been accessible at Kenyon.

Sarah Townsend '20 makes startling inkjet prints on pictorico film with the fitting title *SCREAM*. Each photo is a portrait of a woman mid-scream with a camera-shaking effect. The scream, Townsend explained, symbolizes catharsis for women living in a patriarchal society. Townsend initially planned for the series to be set up as a maze in the Gund Gallery so that the viewer confronts the frustration of being a woman in a patriarchal society, and provided the blueprint online of how this maze would have looked.

Although the artists would have preferred this exhibition to have been experienced in person, the website proved to be a very creative and engaging alternative. The website allows for viewers to browse with ease, as the artists have dedicated a year to their final projects. All 21 of the artists and their work can be found on the website: <https://www.seniorartexhibitionkenyon.com>.



# The former *Collegian* executive staff bids farewell

## Becca Foley '20: Editor-in-chief

I think it would be naive of me to ignore the events of last week in my final piece for this paper. I bid farewell to this campus amid a general hatred directed towards myself and the entirety of the *Collegian*. A large part of the campus has spent the week telling me my voice doesn't matter, that I have no journalistic integrity and even that people like me are the reason nobody trusts the media.

So, in my final words to the campus, I want to emphasize one thing: My voice does matter. Your voice matters. The voices of the underrepresented matter. The voices of criminals matter. The voice of every single person on this campus matters.

The media is a space for free speech—but I say this with exceptions. Censorship is only permissible when there are legal matters involved, such as unconfirmed Title IX allega-

tions or serious attacks and threats—facilitating a forum where these allegations are being thrown around can put the paper in legal jeopardy. That is where we must draw a line. The media is a space for free speech until we become toxic individuals who launch threats and hate towards one another.

I do feel it is important to hold myself and everyone else accountable for our actions. If I publish something factually incorrect in a news article, it is essential to take responsibility for that. I have struggled in the past to own up to my mistakes, but I recognize now that I have made plenty. Accountability is important in journalism, and I hope people continue to hold the media accountable for false things they publish as factually true.

What is not possible, however, is verifying facts within an opinion

piece when they are solely theories or hearsay. Fact-checking in general is a good thing—but the opinions pieces are just that: opinions. They are expressing what the author believes to be the truth. This is an important distinction I have learned to make during my time as editor. Just because an opinion is different from my own does not mean it is not valid enough to be published. I hope this is something everyone can learn to do: listen to voices and perspectives that you don't typically hear.

This week, I saw a darker side of the Kenyon community than I ever thought possible. And while it was a bad note on which to end my term as editor-in-chief, it left space for me to reflect on the importance of the media, especially right now. The media will not always be loved and supported, but its job will always be impor-

tant.

This year, we brought the campus many stories, from controversial backpacks on Peirce lawn to the issues surrounding the Knox County Sheriff to the College's response to the COVID-19 crisis. I felt proud to bring those stories to the community, especially during a time when we did not have to keep publishing a paper. More than ever, it was important for me to be there reporting on these issues. I felt like the *Collegian* mattered. Because it did.

Next time you read something in the media, remember that your voice matters. And that you, too, deserve a platform. You should always be given the right to express your thoughts. That is what free speech is about. That is what a newspaper is for. That is what the *Collegian* is for, and I hope it always will be.

## Adam Schwager '20: Editor-in-chief

If you told me when I stepped foot on campus in 2016 that over the next four years I would write 100-plus articles for, and serve as co-editor-in-chief of, the *Kenyon Collegian*, I would have laughed in your face. Having no real journalism experience, my only *Collegian*-related goal entering college was to appear in "Class Clash" one day.

Instead of taking the traditional route and writing about my predictions or fears for the future of Kenyon, or reflecting on the events of this year, I want to use my farewell to thank every person who made me the writer and editor I am today.

My all-too-brief pre-Kenyon journalism career started and ended at North Bethesda Middle School. I dreamed of being a sports journalist, and my first assignment was to cover the cross-country race. When our school's top runner got edged out at the end of the race, I asked him how it felt to lose after coming so close (admittedly phrased in a harsher manner than intended). The cross-country coach chewed me out for that one and the negative experience drove me away from journalism for seven years.

Flash forward to the spring of 2017 when I was pledging Delta Tau Delta. Back then, there was a tradition that new members had to get the signatures of every active member of the fraternity through various means. The nature of these signature tasks differed based on the

class year of the active member, and the seniors were allowed to ask the new members to complete a modest favor for them. I never knew how much my life would change when I asked then-executive director of the *Collegian* Nathaniel Shahan '17 what I would have to do to get his signature. "Write an article for the *Collegian*," Shahan asked me to choose a section: news, features, arts, opinions or sports. Naturally, I chose sports. I was then set up with another vital figure in my journalistic career: then-Sports Editor Noah Nash '19.

After writing my first article, Nash texted me and asked if I wanted to write another. I thought, "sure, why not," and continued my work through the rest of that year, submitting all of my articles remotely. I would write 500 words and send the piece to Nash, and the article would appear (heavily edited) in the paper the next day. The next semester, Nash asked me to come to the office and help then-Sports Editor Peter Dola '18 as a sports assistant—my first promotion. Dola, or "Petey" as he was affectionately known, was one of the best mentors a young writer could ask for. Not only did he help me come into my own as a reporter, he let me do what no one else was doing at the time: cover one team's season from start to finish.

The first time I felt like I had something to offer was when I was covering the Lords football team. For other sports, you could find an article as good, if not better, than mine on the

Kenyon athletics website. When it came to football, however, I aimed to have the most accurate and detailed coverage of every game. I would be remiss if I didn't use this section to thank Thomas Merkle '20, who was always so great about giving me whatever I needed for my stories. It would have been so easy for him to avoid the media after some of those painful losses in that 0-10 season, but instead he was always willing to talk and open to all of my questions. I also thank him for trusting me with his story, which I consider the highlight of my *Collegian* career.

After only one semester as a full editor, in the lowly sports section, I was somehow promoted to editor-in-chief. It is highly unusual for both editors-in-chief to never have worked for the news section, and there was certainly an adjustment period for former Design Editor Becca Foley '20 and I. The first couple of months were filled with 4 a.m. print times, disgruntled staff members saying we should transition to an online-only publication for the semester and situations out of our control like the week our Adobe license expired during production.

Once we came into our own, I was proud of the paper we were able to run. In a time when print media is dying—and in the middle of the COVID-19 lockdown—we still put out PDF issues every week. Thanks to the work of our incredible staff, specifically Becca, who had the

unenviable task of designing the paper remotely every week, we ensured that this time of crisis will be chronicled in the Kenyon archives, and not just on our subpar website. The largest goal I had entering my tenure was to ensure that the *Kenyon Collegian* was the College's paper of record, providing a truly unfiltered version of the 2019-20 Kenyon experience. I hope we did a good job.

Now that I have done my time as editor-in-chief, I must thank every executive editor who came before me and apologize for any time I ever criticized their decisions. I must extend incredible gratitude to my co-Editor-in-Chief Becca and to Executive Director Tommy Johnson '20. I think we made a pretty good team. Every staff member of Volume 147 deserves so much credit for the work they did, but I have to specifically thank Senior News Editor Evey Weisblat '21 for hunting down the best stories and making sure we had a consistent stable of writers to report on them, Jackson Wald '22 for stepping up and running two sections when we desperately needed a features editor and Andy Kelleher '22 for making sure I didn't use an Oxford comma in this sentence. I look forward to the exemplary work I know they will put into Volume 148. The *Collegian* is in good hands.

To all those who helped me along the way that I don't have space to mention, thank you so much.

Schwanger out.

## Tommy Johnson '20: Executive director

I have worked at the *Collegian* since my first week of college. I have been a part of what I feel has been some powerful and important reporting, and I have also played a role in the *Collegian*'s mistakes. I am proud of the moments where the *Collegian* has held truth to power and I deeply regret the moments where personal lapses in judgments or a failure to follow up on a source did the exact opposite.

For this past year, I have been executive director, which means I've managed the ad-

vertising, invoices, broken printers, the toner cartridge market and the long-term financial status of the paper. In this role, I have come to deeply appreciate all the different constants that have to be in place for writers to write: like working computers and paid software subscriptions. I am thankful that our printers print the *Collegian* without fail, no matter what predawn hour on Thursday it is when we finally finish up. I appreciate the writers, editors and photographers who also act as de-

livery people, lugging stacks of papers across campus each Thursday. I appreciate our news editor, Ronan Elliott '20, who — in addition to co-editing a section — has spent the past three years mailing print editions to our subscribers. I appreciate Jordy Fee-Platt '22, Joe Wint '22 and everyone else who has begrudgingly accepted the charge to drive to Mount Vernon in the snow to pick up several hundred issues of the paper. I don't take any of these things lightly. None are given—and most

go unnoticed and unrecognized.

Lastly, what I have learned over the past four years is that I'll always have more to learn. To learn, and to report, is to listen. The ideal journalist, therefore, is an excellent listener. Whether it be interviewing members of the campus community or going over the copy staff's edits on a piece I've written, the *Collegian* has taught me that I can always become a better listener. I leave the *Collegian* hoping to continue to listen better for the rest of my life.

The opinions page is a space for members of the community to discuss issues relevant to the campus and the world at large. The opinions expressed on this page belong only to the writers. Columns and letters to the editors do not reflect the opinions of the *Collegian* staff. All members of the community are welcome to express opinions through a letter to the editor.

The *Kenyon Collegian* reserves the right to edit all letters submitted for length and clarity. The *Collegian* cannot accept anonymous or pseudonymous letters. Letters must be signed by individuals, not organizations, and must be 1000 words or fewer. Letters must also be received no later than the Tuesday prior to publication. The *Kenyon Collegian* prints as many letters as possible each week subject to space, interest and appropriateness. Members of the editorial board reserve the right to reject any submission. The views expressed in the paper do not necessarily reflect the views of Kenyon College.



# Letter to the editor: a call to the administration

COOPER MURRAY  
CONTRIBUTOR

Over the past three years, I have witnessed a coordinated effort by several administrators to control as many aspects of student life as policy can permit with increasing success. This has resulted in a systematic failure to include students in the College's decision-making process, ultimately damaging the identity of Kenyon's culture and the integrity of its environment.

Students have felt for a long time that their voices are being trivialized and that Kenyon is turning away from being an institution that celebrates our independence, our differences and our passion for improvement and progress. Instead, administrators have made decisions unilaterally that favor the financial interests of the College; Kenyon is turning into an institution that, as Colin Cowperthwaite '18 so aptly put it, "you learn to obey." If administrators continue to govern without the honest and unmitigated input of the student body, the College will be stripped of its identity and drastically harmed in the long term. To avoid such a fate, a channel of communication must be formed. Students and administrators must work together to increase civic participation and transform student government positions into more meaningful and effective roles.

There is no better analogy for the current state of our school than the 50-yard stretch of Middle Path between Gund Gallery and Rosse Hall. In the past two years I have seen the graffiti on this wall become more desperate and profane, as students' playful comments on our comically grim situation turn into bitter discontent with the current administration. In the same span of time, I have seen the values of the student body snubbed, the identity of the College forcefully changed by administrative actions and the freedoms of the student body diminished. Students have taken to the wall to crudely show their frustration on the only platform they feel truly acknowledged: Whereas the wall used to house various peace declarations, expressions of love, and humorous phrases like "eat, pray, love #winemom", now "F--K Admin" and personal attacks on administrators have been repeatedly spray-painted. This frustration, borne from the suppression of students' voices, has repeatedly been ignored by the administration, covered up by a plank of wood or scrubbed away. If anything, these expressions have served as front-row displays of the tense relationship between the students and administrators, and discourage prospective students as they stroll past Ransom Hall. It is a vicious cycle, indicative of a relationship between students and administrators that is antithetical to progress of any sort.

When the organization I am president of, Delta Phi (D-Phi), sought self-improvement through disaffiliation with a consistently and inherently broken national Greek system, we were not provided with the full array of options. After several months of planning, it was only this month that I received a Twitter notification informing me that neither the members of D-Phi nor anyone else would be allowed the opportunity to become a local organization. This was a possibility discussed within the group and considered as a viable option, especially considering our distant relationship with Nationals. The only way a social organization can exist at Kenyon is within the boundaries of Greek life, so the official decision to prohibit any new local organizations felt not only personal, but vindictive to an organization that vigorously has committed to recovering from a history of inequitable social conventions and unhealthy norms. If Kenyon wants Greek life to depart from the archaic "Animal House" stigmas of the past and

truly succeed in the social and academic arenas, then it seems counterintuitive to refuse the admission of new local organizations founded on healthier core ideals. It should support organizations looking to exist independently of the outdated values that many current Greek organizations are built on, not discourage their formation.

Greek organizations are a massive asset to the school, fielding donations from alumni and protecting the school from liability: National organizations' insurance policies ensure that the chapter, not the school, will be liable for its members' actions. With about 25 percent of the student body involved in Greek life, the College is protecting itself from a considerable amount of liability, and is better served by keeping these organizations prevalent and unchanged. Administrators have stated liability plays an essential part in these policy choices and that national organizations can better protect their members than local organizations, yet I can't help but wonder how many more incidents of misconduct by national organizations have occurred or been investigated—compared to those of local organizations—only to dissipate upon the possibility of the donation pool drying up. It appears that the administration cares not for the individuals that comprise a group such as D-Phi, or any other Greek organization, but is instead concerned with the face value of having such institutions at Kenyon after we have gone. Greek organizations are a source of money, control and legitimacy for the College, an aspect of Kenyon's that allows its sparse party scene to contend with other schools for applicants. In reality, the administration is limiting the amount of positive influence that these organizations have on student life through suffocating party policies and organizational obligations.

What is even more troubling is that this "no locals" policy has supposedly been in practice for years, but was only set in writing this month—if the Student Handbook is the only way students can understand the full scope of their rights and responsibilities, what other administrative practices exist that are they unaware of?

Systematically, the "Standards of Excellence" and party policies are a clear message to Greek organizations: Comply entirely or cease to exist. In creating strict, arbitrary stipulations and designations for how organizations are deemed "compliant," administrators dictate the worth of Greek organizations rather than celebrating their unique strengths. Meanwhile, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities' conduct review process relies on alleged unfair practices and unconstitutional methods, often entrapping students or making them feel uncomfortable during questioning. Along with not being provided the proper 24 hours before interviewing in the case of investigations, students have allegedly not been made aware of the evidence against them in an effort to catch them in a lie, been made to feel uncomfortable or obligated to answer questions and have been held for hours at length with no explanation—all serious offenses in a long list of allegations from students that have felt victimized by an unclear and unfair investigation process. In an administration that is consistently reluctant to admit missteps, often requiring student uproar to elicit a genuine response, lack of accountability has become one of the largest issues. Students are unwilling and unable to trust administrators when they show no distinction between unwritten practices and enforceable policy unless changes are made.

With the somber, temporary departure of the PEEPS from campus, whose parties were regarded as some of the most special nights of the year, all-campus parties are likely to become an even more undesirable option for students to

spend their weekend nights. In restricting all-campus parties through both policy and practice, students are losing their right to spend the weekend how they want and will certainly shy away from these events. The transferral of social policies to the Student Organization Handbook will significantly reduce student oversight, leading to even more strict policies, meanwhile the proposed BYOB option will most likely be unused, indicative of an administration indifferent to the wants and needs of the student body.

Considering that, in 2017, the administration's Alcohol Task Force (ATF) found that a majority of alcohol abuse occurs in smaller parties and pregames rather than at large gatherings like all-campus events, I find these choices both puzzling and counterproductive. Why minimize a student's desire to attend the safest alcohol-serving social event available? If organizations no longer desire to host all-campus events for fear of stepping over red tape, students will turn to smaller gatherings where alcohol abuse is more prevalent and acceptable, and the likelihood and severity of dangerous behavior will increase. (I can't even begin to wonder how many students have stumbled out of an NCA so drunk that it is a miracle they made it home.) Couple this with increasingly common trends to supplement nights out with other drugs, and quieter parties begin to feel much more dangerous. Luckily, many of us can rely on our friends and peers—and sometimes even strangers—to help us through these situations. We will find ways to be there for each other no matter who runs the school, but by implementing policy that further discourages students from attending parties that can be regulated by servers, "floaters" and other organization members that protect the students from others and themselves, the administration is opening up the door for students to drink in an uncontrolled environment.

The fact that these party policies implemented in the Organization Handbook have been unofficial for years is doubly concerning; their effect has long been felt by those who frequent such all-campus, or have since chosen not to. The administration's actions are thinly veiled attempts to protect the College against possible litigation, undermine the personal responsibilities of students and organizations, and extend their reach as far as possible—all while potentially increasing the likelihood of tragedy for the students they are meant to protect. Administrators view students as the innate source of all liability, but what they fail to see is that their method of governance is responsible for some of the more dangerous aspects of campus life. In order for Kenyon to abide by its dedication to continual self-improvement, administrators must treat the students as the engaging young constituents they are rather than just liabilities. Instead of helping students develop strong life skills like leadership, critical thinking and communication, the current method of governance encourages submission and discourages thorough examination.

Administrative misconduct does not end at its social policies or encroaching practices. The situation surrounding the Sexual Misconduct Advisors (SMAs)—an organization created for and run by students—is one of the most blatant signs of the administration's true priorities. I can only imagine how many lives the SMAs must have saved, yet the SMAs were essentially stripped of their ability to effectively provide support, as their confidentiality policy, hotline and other facets of the program were eliminated due to so-called "liability risks." Rather than becoming powerless under these severe limitations, it seems that the SMAs became a completely independent peer resource group, the Sexual Respect Peer Alliance (SRPA).

This does not mean SRPA is not a beneficial program to the student body; its creation is a testament to the SMAs and their ability to adapt to a hostile environment. In the face of sweeping national legislation regarding Title IX, a resource like the SMAs was simply crucial to the health of students, especially considering the lack of real infrastructure available to support students mentally and emotionally. You needn't look far at Kenyon to find testimonies of students wronged by the Title IX process. The College has made a consistent effort of dismissing and silencing survivors of sexual misconduct, siding with aggressors and refusing to admit any wrongdoing throughout the process. If students are faced with the choice of reporting to an administration that has prioritized sheltering itself from liability and assailants from culpability, they are inherently denied the safety, support, and trust that anyone undergoing the jarring Title IX process deserves.

Since my first year at Kenyon in 2017, administrators have repeatedly shown that they have grown incapable of perceiving students as anything other than liabilities. With the erasure of off-campus housing, the apparent dismantling of peer counselors, and the ever-restricting social policies put in place, it has become clear administrators' priorities lie within the financial well-being of the College. Because of this tumultuous history, there are more than a few students that feel that this administration is an out of touch and unsympathetic body. This method of governance not only harms the relationship with current students, but is detrimental to the future health of the College.

For years, students have complained about the decaying relationship between the student body and administration, but often only amongst themselves. Many students, myself included, have felt that their grievances would fall upon deaf ears. Instead, much of the student body has left it in the hands of the Senate and Student Council to speak for us, leaving them to sort out the problems that our collective silence has magnified. It is much easier to enjoy the four years you are given, shrug at the problems that loom too large to fix, and move on with a cap and gown—but the sad truth is that Kenyon as we know is beginning to fade. It has become all too clear that there is not a powerful enough vessel through which the student body can communicate with the administration.

If students' ideas and opinions hold no weight in the face of overreaching power, then we are taught not to fight for our own beliefs and enact change, but rather to lay down helpless in the face of adversity. If the College is beholden to what is written policy as administrators have stated, then it concerns me that some of the most sweeping changes ever to campus life have come as a result of unwritten practices; such discrepancies have serious implications and will only lead to confusion about student rights and the administrators' power. As it stands now, the Student Council is the only legitimate channel of communication between the administration and the student body, especially given the extremely diluted powers of the Campus Senate. Any discourse that remains feels entirely artificial: Look no further than the most recent Student Council forum, where many students (of the 40 that attended) felt they were provided inadequate answers and questioned the motives of the meeting's timing—during finals week and, more importantly, a pandemic. Administrators stated that the Handbook revision has been a two-year process, so it vexes me as to why these Handbook discussions have been squeezed into a two-week period amidst an already unorthodox school year; it feels more prudent that any substantial policy changes be delayed until students return, ► page 11



## Letter to the editor cont.

although policy changes themselves may not even guarantee administrators' willingness to color inside the lines. It is no secret that Kenyon students feel a deep connection to Gambier, so offering forums in the current virtual format seems like a conscious choice to limit student input. If this is the example that is set before us, a system where students simply must oblige to the rules without proper discourse, then I fear students will be ill-equipped to achieve their aspirations beyond Kenyon and the value of their degrees reduced.

Through conversations with my peers, it has become evident to me that students don't necessarily care about how these policies affect everyday life as much as they care about the symbolic worth and implications of such policies. Kenyon students value their ideals, freedoms and intellectual passions far more than they do the sometimes-tedious weekend happenings, so it is frustrating for students to see their influence over their own environment purposely stifled. They do not weigh the quality of a party on a Friday night as greater than the quality of time spent better understanding the world, and each other—in fact, I would argue that they weigh it less. Students want the ability to gain substantive experience that prepares them for meaningful roles in society, but if we exist unaware of the practices that we are subject to then all we are prepared for is blind consent. The balance required of any good governing system no longer exists at Kenyon, and decisions with seismic implications are being made without the support, consent and sometimes knowledge of the student body. I know I cannot speak for all students, but I know that I am not alone in my

assessment of this broken relationship and my desire to improve Kenyon.

A genuine channel must be formed through which the concerns, opinions and ideas of the student body can be heard by the administration, and where students have a say in how they are governed and protected going forward. At the very least, Kenyon must be run by administrators that don't actively disregard students' voices and instead choose to listen to them. Kenyon has its fair share of problems, and not all may be up for democratic discussion, but none can be equitably resolved without a cohesive partnership between the student body and the administration. If students are to fully exercise the skills which Kenyon claims to value as an institution of higher learning and personal development, then safeguards and procedures must be implemented which allow for meaningful discussions between students and administrators. Kenyon prides itself on its students' ability to be there for each other and for future generations, so, now more than ever, students must strive to uphold what makes Kenyon special.

I love this place and the people who make it whole with all my heart, but it deeply saddens me to see it torn, piece by piece, policy by policy, from the hands of the students. I will always cherish Kenyon for the opportunities it has given me and the incredible relationships that it has allowed me to build. However, I fear that if students and administrators cannot work together to remedy this rift, the Kenyon that I and my fellow classmates of the class of 2021 will leave behind will not be the place we loved but merely a shadow of what it used to be.



**Moxie's less annoying without  
any traffic to interrupt**

ALEX GILKEY

## Learning to be kind to yourself in the time of COVID-19

MIA SHERIN  
OPINIONS EDITOR

*Trigger warning: suicide and self-harm*

I have learned a lot of lessons in quarantine, some big and some small. I have learned that I like puzzles, and drinking soda at night and David Dobrik. I have learned that in order to remain sane, I cannot speak to anyone in my family before 6 p.m. I have learned that crying is really helpful, that I am not emotionally stable enough to watch Glee and that if I think about him right before I go to sleep, I can guarantee a pleasant dream involving David Dobrik, one where he gives me a Tesla and we drive off into the sunset.

I am also learning how not to carry the weight of the world on my shoulders, something I have long struggled with.

When I was in the fifth grade, my biggest fear was that someone I knew would commit suicide. With the limited knowledge I had at the time, I saw suicide as a death that could have been prevented by empathy or love or kindness. I couldn't shake the fear that someone around me would take their own life, and that I would feel responsible, as if I could have done something to prevent it.

These were indeed intense thoughts for a fifth grader to try and understand. If I heard someone in the cafeteria say something along the lines of, "I did so badly on my math test, I could just kill myself," I would go home crying to my mom and ask her to report it. This would happen many times a week: whether I overheard someone using that common slang, no-

ticed marks on a student's arms or saw a concerning social media post from a peer. Although this fear developed in me at a young age, I have never quite learned to manage it, and I still feel these anxieties today.

I will never regret the times that I checked in with friends, reported something I overheard or trusted my gut and reached out to someone I was worried about; there is no such thing as being too careful when it comes to mental health. But I do wish that the days I went home weeping to my mother, feeling such a heavy burden on my shoulders, that I could have been gentler on myself. I don't share this story to draw pity or to suggest that I have shouldered larger burdens than others—I undoubtedly was fortunate and privileged as a child, and I still am today. These are just the lessons that have stayed with me, ones that I am personally grappling with during this time.

In the time of COVID-19, these tendencies of mine started to worsen. Despite not leaving my house for two months, with the exception of the occasional walk around the neighborhood, I still found myself awake at night, calculating the possibility that I might have unknowingly given the virus to someone else, someone whose pre-existing conditions could lower their chances of surviving, and their suffering would have been my fault, a result of my carelessness, my lack of responsibility. My family has seen this anxiety in action, whether it be my constant nagging to use the serving spoons at dinner, despite us having been quarantined together for months, the

many times I asked everyone to literally not breathe under their masks when rolling down the window at a drive-through, or the mornings I ate my cereal without milk in an effort to reduce our inevitable trips to the grocery store.

To a certain extent, I wish that everyone was this cautious when looking after our communities.

The world might very well be a better place if everyone was constantly checking in on the mental health of their friends and family, or if each of us felt the entire weight of the pandemic on our shoulders. But I also think that this is not a healthy way to live. There is a way to be empathetic and careful without carrying such a heavy burden, feeling an unbearable sense of responsibility.

I visited Kenyon's counseling center last year, in the hopes of getting some advice about this anxiety I had been feeling. What I didn't know then, was that the advice this counselor gave me would end up helping me through quarantine today: "The fact that you care about other people is never a bad thing, and I don't want you to change who you are," he said, "but you need to find an outlet, something to check off your list, so you can tell yourself that you have done everything you can." He gave me his email and told me to reach out to him anytime I felt like I needed to report something, even if I wasn't sure or thought it might be silly. And after I emailed him, I could give myself permission, or even encourage myself, to be done with it. I had done all that I could.

Now, during quarantine, I am learning to apply the same advice. I enjoy read-

ing the news, so I can make sure that I am aware of the latest updates and restrictions. I wear a mask when I leave the house, wash my hands frequently and stay at least six feet away from others when on a walk. And then, I try to let it go.

I want to hold myself accountable. I think it is important to hold ourselves accountable. But I am just a 20-year-old college student. I am still learning, and that is okay. I am just one person living through this global pandemic, and it is unreasonable and unhealthy to feel responsible for the state of an entire country. And I am just a fifth grader, my mom would repeat with me, I cannot alone carry this burden on my shoulders.

I understand that the troubles I face might be small in comparison to those of others, and I am lucky to be in the position I am during this quarantine; my family and I are safe and healthy, which I know is not something everyone can say. But no matter what you are experiencing today, something heavy or light, big or small, I hope that this can serve as a reminder to be gentle with yourself and with others. Now more than ever, it's important to check in with ourselves, and to notice if we are carrying any burdens that are too heavy to lift on our own. Cry to your mom, FaceTime a friend and give yourself and others permission to continue learning. We must continue to look after each other, but we cannot afford to forget the importance of being kind to ourselves.

Mia Sherin '22 is an English major from Wilmette, Ill. You can contact her at sherin1@kenyon.edu.





## Baseball senior spotlight: Pat O'Leary

Patrick O'Leary '20 keeps his eye on the ball at the plate as he prepares for the incoming pitch. O'Leary majored in economics. | COURTESY OF KENYON ATHLETICS

**JORDY FEE-PLATT**  
SPORTS EDITOR

*During the pandemic, spring sport seniors unfortunately will not have the opportunity to compete for the last time, or be fully recognized for contributions and individual accomplishments. Among those accomplished seniors is Lords baseball player Patrick O'Leary '20.*

Baseball wasn't always easy for Patrick O'Leary. When he was applying to college, many institutions wrote him off due to injury concerns.

"Coach Burdette was the only coach who was willing to take a chance on the kid who had two blown hamstrings," O'Leary said. "And [I'd] like to think he made the right decision." O'Leary has certainly rewarded his coach for taking a risk. His Kenyon career comes to an end this year, but not without some impressive accolades.

Ever since he hit a triple in his first collegiate game, O'Leary has been a

tough out in the Lords lineup. He hit .388 in an excellent first-year season, good enough for eighth in the conference. O'Leary's favorite baseball memory also came during that season, when teammate Phillip Nam '17 hit a walk-off grand slam. "I had just worked a walk and I was at first at the time when the bases were loaded," O'Leary recounts. "He deposited a ball over the center field fence against Hiram [College] and it was electric."

The following year was a struggle early on for the Killingworth, Conn. native, as his average sat at .200 mid-season. In his last 15 games, however, he went on a tear, going for 25 for 59 (.424) at the plate. He finished with a .292 average and 28 RBIs. In the final game of the season, Kenyon played at the NCAC conference tournament in Chillicothe, Ohio. O'Leary hit a home run against a 32-9 Denison University team, which meant a lot to the slugger. "Even though we didn't win that game, the emotion of having a sort of

impact on the game at that point was unbelievable," said O'Leary.

O'Leary's junior season was by far his best in a Lords uniform. He filled up the boxscore in seemingly every category. The first baseman/designated hitter hit .403 with 10 home runs, 46 RBIs, 21 walks and eight stolen bases. His 10 round-trippers tied him for first in the conference, and his .761 slugging percentage led the league. With a .490 on-base percentage, he reached base safely in nearly half of his plate appearances. These outstanding numbers earned O'Leary a spot on the 2019 All-NCAC Team.

Unfortunately, he didn't get the chance to build off this incredible season as a senior, but that doesn't mean the brief 2020 season wasn't memorable for O'Leary. He feels the cancellation of their season really brought the team together. Their final game was an emotional moment for him and the entire roster.

"Everybody in the infield along

with myself was just bawling their eyes out at the end of our final game," O'Leary said. "It was great to see that the seniors weren't the only guys who cared about the season. I was crying starting in the bottom of the eighth inning and when we finished, the entire infield, [was] just crying our eyes out at the end." O'Leary was also moved by the complete-game shutout from his teammate Alex Gow '21, who he considers one of his closest friends. "To see him pitch to his full potential the last game of my career was all that I could ever ask for. It's his team from here on out and I expect nothing else but to see him set some records and make me proud," he said.

Since the pandemic forced the Lords to return to their homes, the team has found new ways to communicate with one another. O'Leary says he and his teammates remain in close contact through their group chat. Many players have also posted quarantine updates on the team's In-

stagram account.

Kenyon has taught the legendary Lord many things, but one in particular stands out.

"My professors, and my coaches for that matter, taught me that it was cool to work hard. I busted my butt in both the classroom and the weight room or baseball field to serve as an example to the younger baseball members," O'Leary said. "I hope to leave the school serving as the prototypical example to carry yourself as an athlete because I have applied myself to so many different facets of student life."

The economics major will take that lesson with him out into the world, knowing he has left quite the legacy on the diamond. In three-plus seasons, he finished second in school history in slugging percentage and home runs, sixth in RBIs and eighth in batting average. He will surely be missed both on the field and in the classroom.

## Softball senior spotlight: Lauren Graf

**SYDNEY SCHULMAN**  
SPORTS ASSISTANT

*During the pandemic, Kenyon seniors who play a spring sport will be unable to compete for a final season, or be fully recognized for team contributions and individual accomplishments. At the Collegian, we hope to do our part in giving these seniors an opportunity to be celebrated for their athletic accomplishments and to reflect on their personal experiences. Among these seniors is softball player Lauren Graf.*

When Lauren Graf '20 began learning how to throw and hit a softball with her family in second grade, she couldn't wait to play on a team so she could learn more about the game and engage with others who loved it too.

As Graf grew to adore the game, she quickly became just as enthralled with the feelings of community and encouragement that came with being part of a team. Ultimately, that is part of what drew her to Kenyon College. "You're not just another number at Kenyon," Graf said. "The faculty and staff truly care about you as a person and want to see you succeed in every aspect," Graf told the *Collegian*. "Playing softball at Kenyon reminded me why I love the game. My coaches and teammates always created such a fun atmosphere and it always reminded me of

how lucky I was to have the opportunity [to be on the team]."

Since arriving at Kenyon in 2017, Graf has primarily played second base and outfield. She completed her first year with a .943 fielding percentage, solidifying her role on the team as a strong defensive player. She went on to show a strong work ethic over the years, which prompted significant improvements: Graf began her Kenyon softball career with a .269 batting average, and wrapped up the abbreviated 2020 season batting .364. She also increased her on-base percentage from .293 to .405 in the span of one season from her first to second year.

In addition to these personal feats, the softball team as a whole took important strides during Graf's time at Kenyon, both on and off the field. Last year, the team made the NCAC tournament for the first time since 2013. In the fall 2019 semester, the team maintained an impressive 3.49 GPA. For Graf, a neuroscience major with a concentration in scientific computing, a critical part of her Kenyon experience was being challenged in the classroom. "My courses in computer science have posed some of my greatest challenges at Kenyon. They forced me to think about problems in a new way," she said.

Whether Graf and her teammates were spending time on the softball field or strolling



Graf warms up before a softball game. | COURTESY OF KENYON ATHLETICS

together down Middle Path, her fondest memories are of the times she spent with her friends. She recounted one especially vivid memory: "I had just left Peirce [Dining Hall] and was walking on Middle Path with some of the softball players. The setting sun illuminated the campus in golden light. It took my breath away and in that moment I knew that Kenyon was where I was supposed to be."

Though Graf, like all of this year's seniors,

has had to grapple with an unexpected and unconventional ending to her season, she will be remembered and celebrated for her contributions to the Kenyon community, athletic and otherwise.

Graf is grateful for everything Kenyon has offered her. She wants to thank Kenyon for providing her with such special opportunities, which she is certain she wouldn't find anywhere but on the Hill.